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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2530  
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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6405  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4203  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2798  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7384  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1416  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4768  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0983  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//  
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7118

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 005346

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND AFERNANDEZ,  
IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Canada, Syria/Lebanon,  
EU-Med Conference, Syria/South Africa (11/29)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on November 29 reported that the Foreign Ministry summoned the Canadian ambassador to Damascus, Mark Belli, to protest Canada's vote against the two resolutions adopted by the UN Human Rights Council regarding Israeli violations in the occupied Syrian Golan and the Palestinian territories. "This negative voting obviously contradicts all claims of human rights protection and will encourage Israel to commit more crimes in the occupied Arab lands," a Ministry statement said.

Papers also reported that on November 28 the military commander of the takfiri Tawhid and Jihad Organization, Umar Abdallah, alias Umar Hamra, a Syrian national about 28 years old, tried to cross from Syria to Lebanon at the Judaydat Yabus border post using a fake ID. When confronted, he opened fire on members of the Syrian Public Security with a pistol and tried to escape. While being chased, he detonated an explosive belt he was wearing, killing himself and wounding two Public Security personnel. Authorities immediately rushed to the scene and launched an investigation. Abdallah had nine fake identity cards in his possession.

Papers continued to feature more Arab and foreign condemnations of the assaults against Syrian workers in Lebanon and cited a statement by resigned Lebanese Minister of Labor Trad Hamadeh, who said that "such acts and behavior are condemned and unacceptable to the Lebanese; we must punish all those who committed these hostile acts." Hamadeh called upon all Lebanese media to expose everyone who tries to harm Syrian workers in Lebanon, in order to protect their security, lives and interests in Lebanon.

A surprising statement in government-owned Tishreen blames the plight of Syrian workers in Lebanon on the failure of the Syrian Ministry of Labor to provide jobs for them in Syria (See "Syrian Workers in Lebanon, a Trick Used Another Time!", below).

Government-owned Tishreen reported the meeting of Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal al-Meqdad with South African Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils on Nov. 28. Kasrils described Syria as a regional power whose role is active and important in establishing security and stability in the region, saying that all world powers can benefit from Syria's role because Syria can be of great assistance.

"We are happy that the USA, Europe and Britain have begun to realize Syria's significant role in the region," Kasrils stated to SANA, noting that his country rejects every policy that aims to isolate states and peoples instead of enhancing dialogue among them.

End of summary.

## 12. Selected Headlines:

"The Foreign Ministry summons the Canadian ambassador to Damascus, Mark Belli, to protest the negative position adopted by his country at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 11/29)

"Foreign Minister Walid al-Mouallem meets Spanish FM Miguel Angel Moratinos and takes part in the EU-Med Conference discussions. Al-Mouallem: The absence of serious peace initiatives in the region undermines genuine efforts to cement stability and prosperity in it" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/29)

"International Trade Unions Federation condemns assaults against Syrian workers in Lebanon" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/29)

"Syria announces that Umar Hamra, the terrorist and military official of the takfiri Tawhid and Jihad organization blew himself up at the Syrian-Lebanese border when he was intercepted by Syrian security forces" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/29)

"Kofi Annan and Jimmy Carter call for openness towards Syria and Iran" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/29)

## 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Raising Sedition"

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Ali Qasim, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (11/27): "There are indications that the actual objective of Minister Al-Jumayyil's assassination was to create domestic strife and drag Lebanon into a civil war, allowing some people to regain their old glory as warlords and enabling others to maintain their status as warlords after the breakdown of their popular base and the disintegration of the state of mobilization, which was exploited in the worst possible way to serve personal objectives, with the Lebanese people as the real losers...."

"Government forces are pushing the Lebanese situation toward further tension to cover their growing bankruptcy.... The Lebanese people must be cautious and must block the efforts of those who try to tamper with civil peace...."

"The governing team in Lebanon is being used to realize Israeli objectives and save American plans from the failure they are facing."

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"Ja'ja Predicts, and the Lebanese Government Lets Pass"

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Isam Dari, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (11/29): "Shortly before Al-Jumayyil's assassination, Samir Ja'ja, leader of the Lebanese Forces Party, predicted that assassinations against ministers and parliament members would take place, saying that he got his information from government sources...."

"The government deliberately ignored Ja'ja's predictions because it needed a scapegoat for what was happening at the Security Council...."

"Those who planned and implemented the crime are logically known but they are still unknown to the February 14 groups, which wanted to use the crime to continue releasing their venom and hatred toward Syria and to break the back of the opposition by fracturing it and

preventing it from organizing popular moves to bring down the  
Feltman-Al-Saniora government...."

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"Syrian Workers in Lebanon, a Trick Used Another Time!"  
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As'ad Abbud, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote  
(11/29): "Those who attack Syrian workers in Lebanon are tools  
charged by the political novices in Lebanon, from the dirty trio of  
Sa'd al-Hariri, Walid Junblatt, and Samir Ja'ja, to the media  
outlets, to the 'tea' group" [REFERENCE to acting Interior Minister  
Ahmad Fatfat and his security agencies, the security men who were  
stationed in Marj Uyun barracks during the recent Israeli invasion  
of south Lebanon and who reportedly offered tea to the Israeli  
soldiers when they entered the barracks.]

"What prevents those who offer tea to the invading occupation forces  
while their country is bleeding on all sides and its children are  
dying under the rubble, from hurting Syrian workers...?"

"What justifies the presence of Syrian workers in Lebanon...? The  
Syrian Ministry of Labor is to blame for its failure to secure jobs  
for these Syrian workers who endanger their lives by seeking jobs in  
Lebanon...."

Corbin